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SB-475 Park property: City of Laguna Woods: City Centre Park. (2023-2024)

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Senate Bill No. 475

CHAPTER 287

An act to add Section 5096.634 to the Public Resources Code, relating to park property.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 475, Min. Park property: City of Laguna Woods: City Centre Park.

The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002, approved by the voters as Proposition 40 at the March 5, 2022, statewide primary election, authorizes the issuance of bonds for the purpose of financing certain acquisition and development projects, including local assistance programs for the acquisition and development of neighborhood, community, and regional parks and recreation areas, as specified.

This bill would authorize the City of Laguna Woods, until January 1, 2026, to remove from public recreation use, and use as a fire station and for public safety purposes, a portion of City Centre Park improved with grant moneys from the bond act described above, subject to the reinvestment of \$212,000 in capital improvements in the remaining City Centre Park, to be used for park purposes, and at no cost to the state, as provided. The bill would require that the plan for capital improvements be approved by the Department of Parks and Recreation before the improvements are made. The bill would also require the capital improvements to be completed within 3 years of the department's approval of the plan.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the City of Laguna Woods.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) Over 80 percent of the residents of the City of Laguna Woods (city) are 65 years of age or older.
- (b) In 2022, the Orange County Fire Authority responded to 5,762 incidents within the city, of which 4,483 were Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls.
- (c) The one fire station located within the city is located on the city's eastern boundary.
- (d) In recent years, there has been an increase in community growth, traffic in the city, and call volume to the Orange County Fire Authority.
- (e) These increases have led to longer response times for the western portions of the city.

(f) As a result, there is a significant need to have a second fire station strategically located within the city for improved delivery of services.

(g) In 2022, the Orange County Fire Authority conducted an analysis of undeveloped sites that could physically accommodate a new fire station.

(h) That analysis determined that the City Centre Park, which is owned by the city, would be the best location to serve the western portions of the city.

(i) A new Orange County Fire Authority fire station will improve response times and accommodate the growing public safety demands of the city's residents and neighboring areas.

(j) This act intends to allow for the construction of a new fire station in the city that will enhance the delivery of services to the city's residents, while also maximizing underutilized City Centre Park land.

SEC. 2. Section 5096.634 is added to the Public Resources Code, immediately following Section 5096.633, to read:

5096.634. (a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "City" means the City of Laguna Woods.

(2) "City Centre Park property" means the approximately 0.32 acre portion of City Centre Park to be removed from public recreation use by the City of Laguna Woods and used as a fire station and for public safety purposes pursuant to subdivision (c).

(3) "Department" means the Department of Parks and Recreation.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the removal of park property and the reinvestment of funding for capital improvements in the City Centre Park authorized under this section is for the sole purposes of enhancing recreational opportunities and improving public safety in the city, and not to facilitate industrial development.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, no later than January 1, 2026, the city may remove from public recreation use City Centre Park property improved with grant moneys from this chapter, subject to the reinvestment of two hundred twelve thousand dollars (\$212,000) in capital improvements as described in subdivision (d) in the remaining City Centre Park, which shall be used for park purposes, subject to all applicable requirements of the grant funding received under this chapter, and at no cost to the state. The two-hundred-twelve-thousand-dollar (\$212,000) reinvestment was calculated by an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the City Centre Park property conducted in 2022 and submitted by the city to the department in 2023.

(d) The city shall develop a plan for capital improvements to be made to the remaining City Centre Park that meets the following requirements:

(1) The plan shall include capital improvements in the amount of two hundred twelve thousand dollars (\$212,000) in the remaining City Centre Park.

(2) The city shall conduct two community meetings to solicit the input of residents of the city for the capital improvements to be made.

(3) The plan shall be approved by the city council of the city and submitted to the department on or before January 1, 2025.

(4) The plan shall enhance the active or passive recreational utility to the public of the remaining City Centre Park.

(e) The plan developed pursuant to subdivision (d) shall be approved by the department before any of the capital improvements identified in the plan are made to the remaining City Centre Park.

(f) The city shall complete the capital improvements identified in the plan developed pursuant to subdivision (d) within three years of the department's approval of the plan.

SEC. 3. The Legislature finds and declares that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California Constitution because of the unique circumstances concerning the City Centre Park property in the City of Laguna Woods and the desire of the city to increase public safety and emergency response times.